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St. Vincent & the Grenadines: Yesterday, Today & Tomorrow

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St. Vincent & the Grenadines: Yesterday, Today & Tomorrow

by Leon F. Bouvier
March 1984

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St. Vincent & the Grenadines: Yesterday, Today & Tomorrow

St. Vincent & the Grenadines Yesterday

In 1844, when the first post-emancipation census was taken in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, 27,248 residents of the islands were counted. The country, contrary to elsewhere in the Caribbean, conducted a census every ten years from 1851 through 1931, with the exception of 1901 (see Table 1). Although these enumerations may not all have been of high quality, they nevertheless yield a fairly accurate approximation of what transpired, as far as population growth in the islands is concerned, over that 87-year period.

From 1844 to 1881, population growth was fairly substantial, averaging about 1.1 percent per year. The number of residents increased during that interval by 13,300. Over the next 30 years, however, growth was negligible: from 40,548 in 1881 to 41,887 in 1911. Population losses occurred as a result of the disasters of the 1898 hurricane, when an estimated 300 persons died, and the volcano eruption in 1902, when some 2,000 residents lost their lives.

Table 1: Population of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, 1844–1931

Year	Number
1844	27,248
1851	30,128
1861	31,755
1871	35,688
1881	40,548
1891	41,054
1911	41,877
1921	44,447
1931	47,961

After 1911, the rate of growth once again increased, particularly after 1931, and by 1946 the total population reached 61,780. Over this latter interval the average annual rate of growth was 1.7, substantially higher than in previous periods. Such growth over the century of 1846 to 1946 typified the Windward Islands in contrast to the Leeward Islands, where growth was far less substantial.

Vital statistics data are almost non-existent for the years prior to 1921. It can be reasonably assumed that both fertility and mortality were quite high throughout the nineteenth century, with births surpassing deaths except in 1898 and 1902 (the years of the hurricane and the volcano eruption). Levels of international migration prior to the turn of the century are particularly difficult to ascertain. As a general rule, crude birth rates of 40–45 per 1,000 population, crude death rates of 20–25 per 1,000, and a fair amount of emigration reflect the overall nineteenth-century demographic picture of this part of the Caribbean.

Data on births and deaths are available for the period 1921–46 and estimates of crude birth and death rates are thus possible. Little variation occurred in birth rates over those 25 years, and the rate remained close to 40 per 1,000. Some improvements in mortality were noted and the crude death rate fell somewhat, from 19.3 in 1920–25 to 16.8 in 1940–45. As a result, natural increase rates (that is, the difference between crude birth and death rates) rose from 1.9 percent to 2.4 percent per year in the early 1940s before dropping somewhat in the late 1940s.

Only because emigration was quite high did the rate of population growth stay well below 2.0 per year. Net emigration was particularly high between 1921 and 1931, at about 570 persons yer year. This suggests an emigration rate of 12.5 per 1,000 population. Out-movements slowed in the 1930s and 1940s, averaging about

Table 2: Population of St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Rates of Birth, Death, and Natural Increase, 1946–70

Year	Population	Crude Birth Rate	Crude Death Rate	Rate of Natural Increase
	(number)	(per 1,000 population)		(percent)
1946	61,780	38.7	15.5	2.3
1950	67,120*	40.0	15.4	2.5
1955	76,050*	57.8	14.6	3.3
1960	79,948	49.4	15.0	3.4
1970	86,314	35.7	8.3	2.7

*End-of-year estimates developed by Roberts and Harewood.

200 per year. Without such overall high levels of emigration, the population of St. Vincent and the Grenadines in 1946 might well have passed 80,000 rather than the 61,780 residents counted that year.

Although no censuses were taken between 1946 and 1960, the quality of the vital statistics improved, particularly due to the work of Caribbean demographers George Roberts and Jack Harewood. This report's discussion for this period is based on their exhaustive study on the population of the British Commonwealth nations of the Caribbean.*

St. Vincent and the Grenadines' population grew by 18,168 between 1946 and 1960, at which time it stood at 79,948 (see Table 2). This indicates an annual rate of growth of about 1.8 percent—slightly higher than during the preceding 15 years. Such a rate, if maintained indefinitely, would result in a doubling of the population in about 39 years.

Over the 1946–60 period natural increase amounted to almost 30,000 (45,000 births minus 15,000 deaths) and net emigration was estimated at between 11,000 and 12,000. Fertility increased from 38.7 per 1,000 population in 1946 to 49.4 in 1960. The latter rate is one of the highest ever recorded in any East Caribbean island, and the rate may, in fact, have topped 50 per 1,000 in the mid-1950s. On the other hand, mortality levels hardly varied: The crude death rate remained around 15 per 1,000.

The natural increase resulting from these fertility and mortality rates was extremely high—over 3.3 percent per year in the 1950s. Nevertheless, population growth was tempered by the large emigration from the islands in this period. Net emigration averaged about 850 per year—a rate of 12 per 1,000, close to the rate of the 1920s.

The high rate of population growth noted for 1931 through 1960 subsided during the following decade. By 1970, the population of St. Vincent and the Grenadines totaled 86,314—just 6,366 more than enumerated in 1960. This represented an annual rate of growth of just 0.8 percent. The change can be explained both by reductions in fertility and by increases in net emigration. Birth rates fell rapidly, reaching 35.7 in 1970—a significant drop from the rate of 49.4 measured by Roberts and Harewood for 1960. Similarly, death rates fell, though not as rapidly, from 15.0 to 8.3. Numerically, 36,565 births and 9,164 deaths were recorded over the decade.

These figures suggest emigration from the islands at unprecedented rates. Guadeloupan demographer Jean-Pierre Guengant has estimated the migration rate for the 1960s at about 24 per 1,000. Assuming the comparative accuracy of the 1960 and 1970 censuses, some 21,000 more people left St. Vincent and the Grenadines than moved to the islands over the decade, which supports Guengant's estimate.

*G.H. Roberts and Jack Harewood, *Estimates of Intercensal Population by Age and Sex and Revised Vital Rates for British Caribbean Countries, 1946–1960* (University of West Indies, 1964).

The declines in fertility and mortality were to be expected. Health conditions improved and infant mortality was lower. Families began realizing that more newborns would survive to adulthood. Perhaps some couples started using family planning during this time as well. But the incredibly high level of emigration can only be explained through economic factors. People tend to leave in search of jobs. Moves to the neighbouring larger islands, such as Trinidad and Tobago and Barbados, as well as to the metropolitan nations were considerable.

St. Vincent and the Grenadines saw its population grow from 27,248 in 1844 to 86,314 in 1970. Such growth is among the highest recorded in the region. The century and a quarter was marked by generally high fertility and relatively high (though falling) mortality. Emigration, which had apparently not been particularly large in the nineteenth century, increased dramatically after 1920 and reached enormous levels after World War II.

St. Vincent & the Grenadines Today

The 1980 census of St. Vincent and the Grenadines enumerated 97,845 islanders, which was 11,531 more residents than in 1970.† This yields an average annual rate of growth for the decade of 1.2 percent—slightly lower than that noted for the previous decade.

Throughout the 1970s, the crude birth rate continued to fall and reached 31.0 in 1980, the lowest ever recorded up to that date. The total fertility rate (TFR, which is the average number of live births per woman) was 4.5 in 1980. Family planning became more acceptable in the 1970s, although many couples still were not using any method. By 1981, some 20 percent of the women at risk of pregnancy were using contraceptives.

The crude death rate fell slightly, from 8.3 in 1970 to 7.3 per 1,000 population in 1980, and the infant mortality rate dropped by 1979 to 39 deaths to infants under age one per 1,000 births.

Determining the extent of net migration is always considerably more difficult than determining crude birth and death rates. However, by using the reverse projection demographic technique* it is possible to arrive at reasonably reliable estimates of the extent of net migration between two censuses by age and sex.

Based on this method, net emigration from St. Vincent and the Grenadines is estimated to have been about 10,000 for the decade of the 1970s, or 1,000 per year. Slightly more women than men emigrated and, as always in the East Caribbean, most emigrants were young adults. The few people moving into the country were over age 55, presumably returnees from abroad or from neighbouring islands.

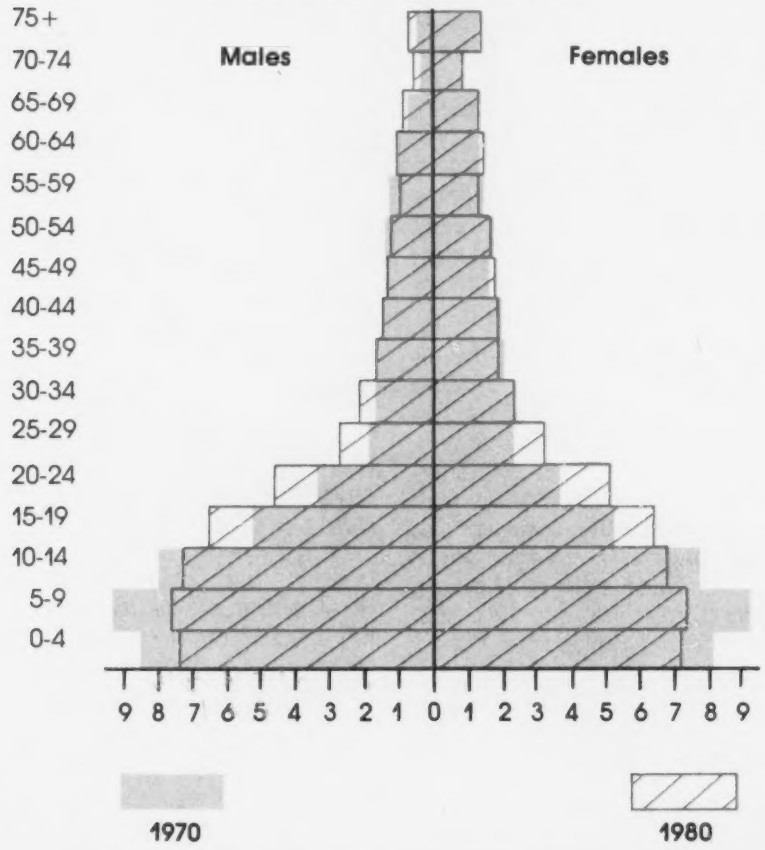
According to official records 4,269 Vincentians entered the United States as permanent immigrants over the 1970s (see Table 3), and perhaps another 500 went to Canada. The migration to the United States was considerably larger than in the 1960s. The migration stream presumably shifted dramatically away from the United Kingdom after passage of the Commonwealth Immigration Act of 1962.

The changes in fertility, migration, and, to a certain extent, mortality contributed

†The figure of 97,845 is considerably lower than the total projected population for 1980 and hence is not official.

*The reverse projection method "survives" the population by age and sex backward in five-year intervals. By using appropriate survival rates, a population—males aged 45–49 in 1980, for example—can be restored to the number who would have been 40–44 in 1975 and 35–39 in 1970. Assuming relatively complete censuses in both 1970 and 1980, any differences in the age-sex distribution in 1970 between the restored and the actual enumerated populations must be accounted for by either immigration or emigration. This yields only a rough estimate of the level of net migration over a decade; nonetheless it is the best available, short of actual data on migration itself.

Figure 1: Age-Sex Distribution of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, 1970 and 1980



to changes in the age composition of the nation between 1970 and 1980, as can be seen in Figure 1. St. Vincent and the Grenadines has been and remains a very young nation. Its median age was about 16.5 in 1980, slightly higher than the very low figure of 14.5 in 1970. This median age ranks among the lowest in the world. The reasons are twofold: historically high levels of fertility and massive emigration of young adults.

Table 3: Permanent St. Vincent-Born Immigrants Admitted to the United States, 1960–79

Year	Number
1960–64	571
1965–69	1,201
1970–74	1,564
1975	346
1976	456
1977	585
1978	679
1979	639

In 1970, 51.2 percent of Vincentians were under the age of 15. In fact, there were twice as many people under the age of 10 as there were aged 15–24! On the other hand, only 4.8 percent of the islanders were 65 or older. Because of the extremely large proportion of young people in the population, the dependency ratio in 1970 was very high: 127 persons of dependent age (under 15 or over 64) per 100 persons of active age (15–64).

Some improvement in the dependency

ratio occurred by 1980, primarily because fertility fell somewhat over the decade. By 1980, the proportion under 15 was down to 43.7 percent and that 65 or older was up to 5.7 percent. The resulting ratio was 98 dependents per 100 persons of active age. Thus fewer working-age people were needed to support the dependents. Yet the ratio remains high compared with neighbours such as Barbados (78) and Antigua and Barbuda (62).

Even more important than changes in age distribution are the numerical variations these imply. For example, the number of children between 5 and 14, an approximation of the figure of school enrollment, dropped from 29,813 in 1970 to 28,570 in 1980—an insignificant decline. Greater reductions in fertility would have resulted in larger numerical decreases. However, the number of elderly grew from 4,190 in 1970 to 5,613 in 1980—an increase of 33 percent. This is a typical developing-country situation that can be expected to continue in future years. As fertility falls and life expectancy rises, the proportion of youth also falls while that of the elderly rises.

The demographic future of St. Vincent and the Grenadines remains a question. Fertility has been falling but still remains relatively high compared with some of its neighbours. Progress in extending life has been made but, again, not to the extent noted elsewhere. Emigration remains substantial, though it fell somewhat in the 1970s. The carrying capacity of the islands is necessarily limited, perhaps to an eventual population size of some 150,000 or so. It remains to be seen if such a goal can be attained without being exceeded.

St. Vincent & the Grenadines Tomorrow

Societal planning for the future always benefits from population projections. In this report alternative sets of projections have been developed using different levels of fertility and migration. These result in a variety of scenarios that depict what the population of St. Vincent and the Grenadines would be—its size and age distribution—at various points in the future. It should be emphasized that these are not to be viewed as "predictions"; they are simply the results of mathematical calculations based on certain stated assumptions about the future demographic behaviour of Vincentians.

Demographic Assumptions: Three postulates of fertility behaviour are used. One assumes a continuation of the present total fertility rate of 4.5 live births per woman for the next 50 years. Another assumes that fertility will fall to 2.8 by 1990, remaining thereafter at that level. The third postulate is that fertility will fall to 2.1 by 1990, with no further changes after that date. This last is the level needed to replace the population in the long run without any migration.

Only one set of mortality assumptions is used. For women, life expectancy is assumed to increase from 65 years at birth in 1980 to 70 years by the turn of the century, with no further changes anticipated afterwards. For men, life expectancy is assumed to increase from 61 to 66 years by the year 2000.

Three migration postulates are used. The first projects a continuation of the current level of net emigration of 1,000 per year. The second assumes half that amount: 500 per year beginning in 1980. A third assumption, used for illustrative purposes only, has net migration equaling zero; it assumes, in other words, that as many people enter the country as leave it.

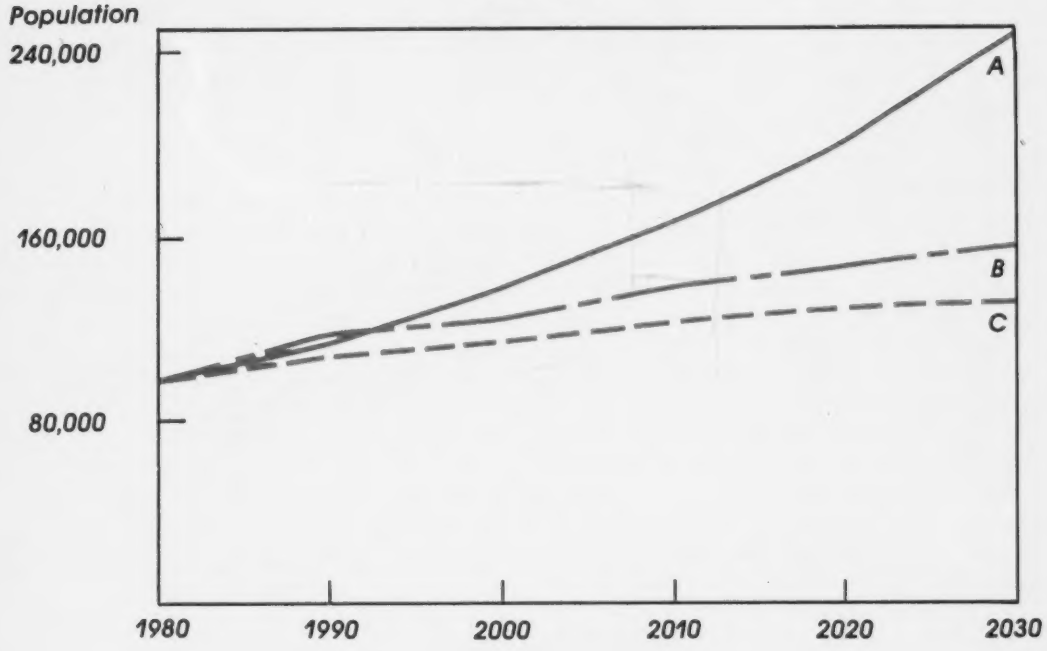
Various combinations of these postulates about fertility, mortality, and migration can be developed. For this report three major combinations have been created (see Figure 2; for supporting data, see Appendix Table A):

Scenario A – current fertility (4.5) and current net emigration (1,000 per year)

Scenario B – replacement-level fertility (2.1) and reduced net emigration (500 per year)

Scenario C – reduced fertility (2.8) and current net emigration (1,000 per year).

Figure 2: Population of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, 1980–2030



A: TFR of 4.5, net emigration of 1,000
B: TFR of 2.1, net emigration of 500
C: TFR of 2.8, net emigration of 1,000

The impact of the demographic behaviour in these three scenarios is discussed in the rest of this report. In addition, two other scenarios have been developed to illustrate two extremes of demographic behaviour. Scenario D (fertility of 2.1 and no migration) and Scenario E (fertility of 4.5 and no migration) are discussed briefly and their calculations are summarized in the Appendices.

Population Projections: A continuation of the current demographic behaviour of Vincentians (Scenario A) would lead to massive increases in population within a fairly short period of time. By the turn of the century, the population in St. Vincent and the Grenadines would reach 137,137. Within 50 years, in 2030, the population would approach the quarter of a million mark. By 2000 the population would have increased by 42 percent; by 2030, the figure would be 157 percent.

Assuming that net emigration cannot be expected to increase in the future (indeed, it could be argued that it might be reduced some, given the increasing reluctance of many receiving countries to accept as many immigrants as in the past), then surely fertility levels must be reduced. Furthermore, as St. Vincent and the Grenadines has a very limited land area, the appropriate question to ask is "How many people can the country adequately support?"

Although only the nation's policymakers can answer that question, an eventual zero-growth nation of some 125,000–150,000 seems fairly reasonable, and this range serves as a general target in this report. Given these conditions, Scenarios B and C have been developed as alternative paths to follow if indeed the nation's goal is to limit population size to about 125,000–150,000.

Under Scenario B net emigration is halved, to 500 per year. As stated earlier, such a development is not out of the question. What level of fertility would be required in such a situation to result in an eventual stationary population of not more than 150,000? The calculations undertaken for this report indicate that fertility would have to be cut by 1990 to 2.1 live births per woman on average.

Given this set of assumptions, the population would grow by about 30,000 by the turn of the century, when it would total 126,997. Thirty years later, it would barely top 150,000. Beyond then, the population would begin to decline slowly. Over the whole 50-year period, growth, while steady, would be moderate—just under 0.9 percent per year. Such growth may well be acceptable, but lowering fertility from 4.5 to 2.1 in just ten years is quite unlikely.

Perhaps net emigration levels will not fall at all. Currently about 1,000 more people leave the country than enter it. As noted in Scenario A, even with such a high rate of net emigration, population size would more than double in 40 years if current fertility levels did not fall. What fertility level is necessary to attain zero growth within 50 years within the range stated earlier of 125,000–150,000?

According to Scenario C, a total fertility rate of 2.8 (beginning in 1990) combined with the current level of net emigration would lead to a no-growth situation by 2030, at which time the population of St. Vincent and the Grenadines would number just under 129,000. Such a scenario appers to be quite plausible. Net emigration could be maintained at its present size if receiving countries do not impose additional barriers; lowering fertility from 4.5 to 2.8 in ten years, while quite ambitious, can be accomplished.

Of the two additional scenarios postulated (see Appendix Table A for details), Scenario D shows that the population would grow for quite awhile if fertility were at replacement level and there were no migration. Within 50 years the population would double; indeed, growth would continue until 2045, at which time it would stabilize at 195,000.

Why would the number of Vincentians double despite fertility being at replacement level? There is a built-in momentum for growth, particularly in youthful populations, as in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Although fertility would fall rapidly and remain low, the number of women in their reproductive years would be so large that births would still exceed deaths, although the difference would gradually fall and eventually disappear in about 70 years.

Scenario E projects the population size if the current fertility rate of 4.5 remains constant and net migration equals zero. The numbers are awesome: nearly 175,000 in 2000 and over 408,000 just 30 years later. By comparing Scenario A (which assumes a continuation of current fertility levels) with Scenario E, the contribution of net emigration to lowering future population size becomes clear. In 2000, there would be 37,000 more Vincentians under Scenario E than with current levels of net emigration; by 2030, the difference would be 160,000.

Both Scenario B and Scenario C appear to meet the requirements specified earlier—that is, to arrive at a zero-growth population in the vicinity of 125,000–150,000. Of course, many other combinations of fertility and migration levels would yield similar results. For example, a total fertility rate of 2.5 and net emigration of 750 per year would result in a similar size population in 2030. These two scenarios are intended to serve as guidelines in the development of social and economic policy and it should be understood that they are just that and nothing more—mathematical models rather than attempts to predict what will in fact occur.

As reducing fertility and keeping emigration high can both result in declining rates of growth, it remains to be seen which variable is more responsive to policy initiatives. What is very much needed are good statistics that will allow for a continuing monitoring of population change.

As mentioned earlier, population characteristics, particularly age distribution, are also affected by changes in demo-

Table 4: Percent Distribution of Population by Age-Group in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, 1980–2030

Scenario	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020	2030
Scenario A						
Under 15	44	41	42	41	40	40
15–64	50	53	52	54	55	54
65 or older	6	6	6	5	5	6
Scenario B						
Under 15	44	39	30	27	24	22
15–64	50	56	65	68	69	67
65 or older	6	5	5	5	7	11
Scenario C						
Under 15	44	39	32	31	29	27
15–64	50	55	61	62	63	62
65 or older	6	6	7	7	8	11

graphic behaviour—indeed, by changes that may have occurred 20 and even 30 years ago.

If current demographic behaviour remains unchanged in future years, the overall proportional age distribution will not vary significantly (see Table 4). In 1980, 44 percent of all Vincentians were under 15; 50 percent were between 15 and 64; and 6 percent were 65 or older. A slight decline in the young population would be noted by 1990 under Scenario A, after which only slight variations would take place. Similarly, the proportion of elderly would not vary much during the next 50 years. Because of the decline in the young population, some proportional growth would be noted among the working-age population (15–64).

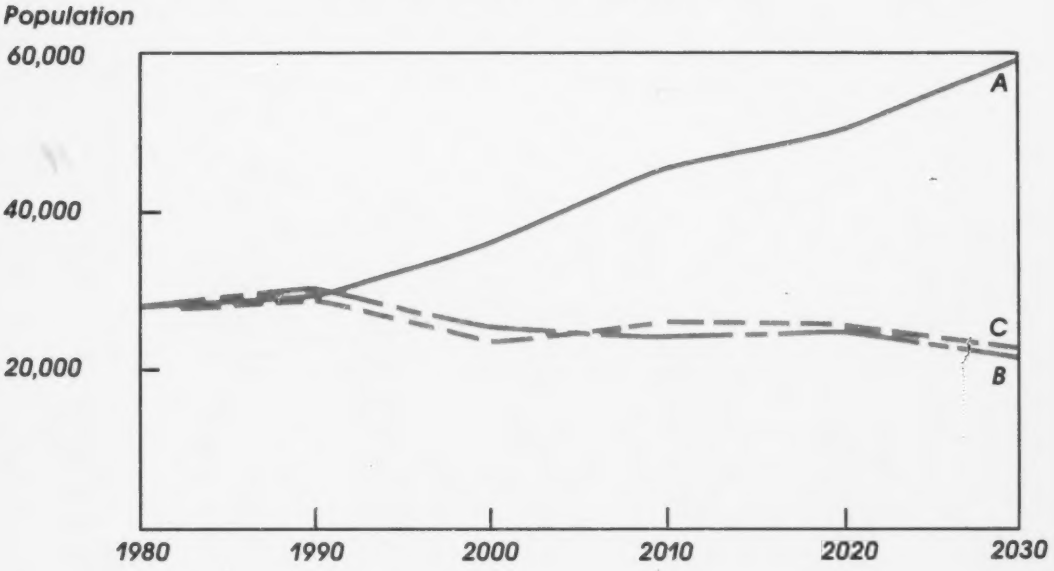
Changes in proportional age distribution would be far more noticeable under Scenarios B and C. Looking first at B, youth would become an ever smaller proportion of the population over time—dropping to 30 percent by the year 2000 and to 22 percent by 2030. Both the active and the elderly groups would increase their shares of the total population. By 2030, two-thirds of all Vincentians would be between 15 and 64 and another 11 percent would be 65 or older, in marked contrast to the current situation.

Under Scenario C, the young group would also decline, though not as much as under B; the elderly group would again grow to 11 percent in 2030, but the working-age group would only increase its share to 62 percent rather than the 67 percent under B. These substantial changes in age distribution under Scenarios B and C result from both the postulated drop in fertility (which explains the declining proportion of youth) and the high levels of fertility in 1980 and earlier (which explains the growing proportion of elderly after 2015). Particularly interesting is the fact that under either of these scenarios the dependency ratio would eventually be much lower than under A.

Taken together, any future changes in fertility and/or migration behaviour will have significant impacts not only on the age distribution of the population but also on the number of people enrolled in schools, the number of workers and jobseekers, and the number of retired individuals. It is the impact of demographic patterns on such areas that is rightfully of most concern to policymakers.

School Enrollment: The school-age population of St. Vincent and the Grenadines in 1980 (that is, the number of children aged 5 through 14) totaled 28,570. This figure is used as a substitute for actual school enrollments as in most developing countries enrollments closely approximate the total population in that age category.

Figure 3: School-Age Population (5–14) in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, 1980–2030



A: TFR of 4.5, net emigration of 1,000
B: TFR of 2.1, net emigration of 500
C: TFR of 2.8, net emigration of 1,000

Under Scenario A, school enrollments would grow substantially in future years, to 36,933 in 2000 and to almost 60,000 in 2030 (see Figure 3; for supporting data, see Appendix Table B). In other words, in 50 years the number of children enrolled in schools would double. This, of course, reflects the continued high fertility posited in this scenario.

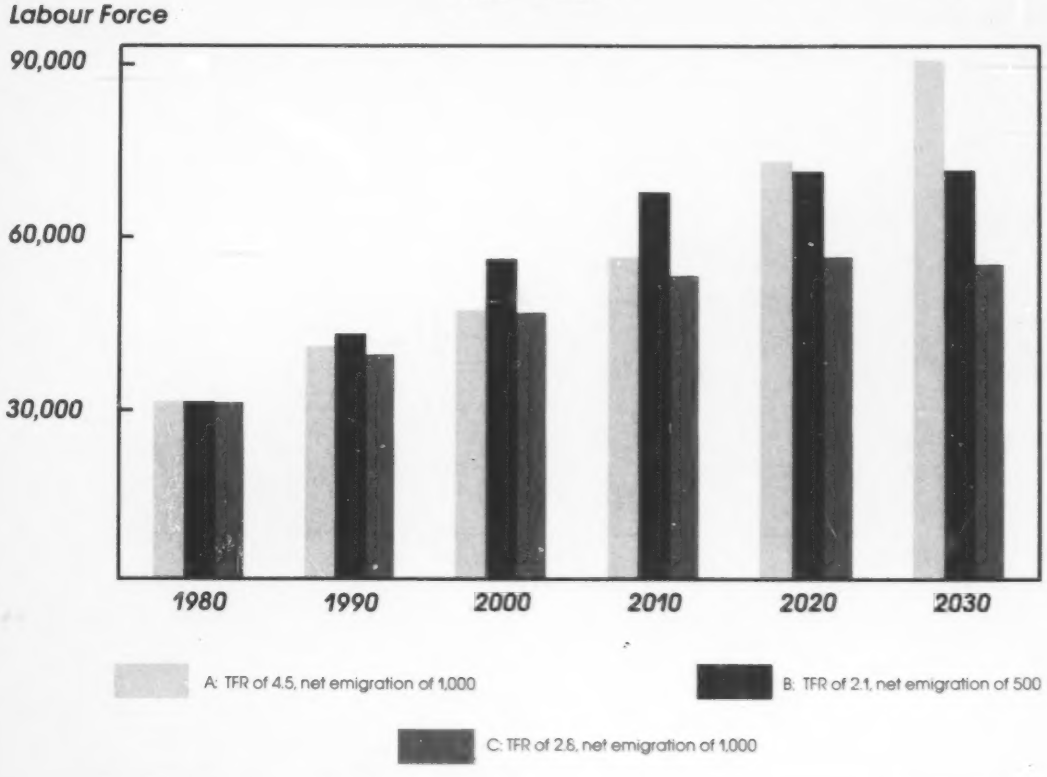
Under both Scenario B and Scenario C, school enrollments would increase slightly between 1980 and 1990. After that, when fertility would be markedly lower, enrollments would decline. The number of school-age children in 1980 would never again be reached. The difference between Scenarios B and C in the next century would not be considerable.

Such a prospect for the educational system of the future is positive indeed and could result in major qualitative improvements in the schools of the nation. To be sure, such developments rest on an assumption of substantial reductions in fertility.

Labour Force: Irrespective of scenario selected, the labour force of St. Vincent and the Grenadines will grow tremendously at least for the next 20–30 years. Based on labour force participation rates developed for the Windward Islands by the International Labour Office, the total number of people working or looking for work in 1980 was 31,259.

That number is bound to increase dramatically between now and the turn of the century. If fertility and net emigration remain at current levels (Scenario A), 40,981 people would be in the labour force by 1990 and 47,607 by 2000 (see Figure 4; for supporting data, see Appendix Table C). Thus, about 16,000 more jobs would have to be created by the end of this century simply to keep unemployment at its present unsatisfactory level of about 15 percent. This means that in 1990 there would

Figure 4: Labour Force in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, 1980–2030



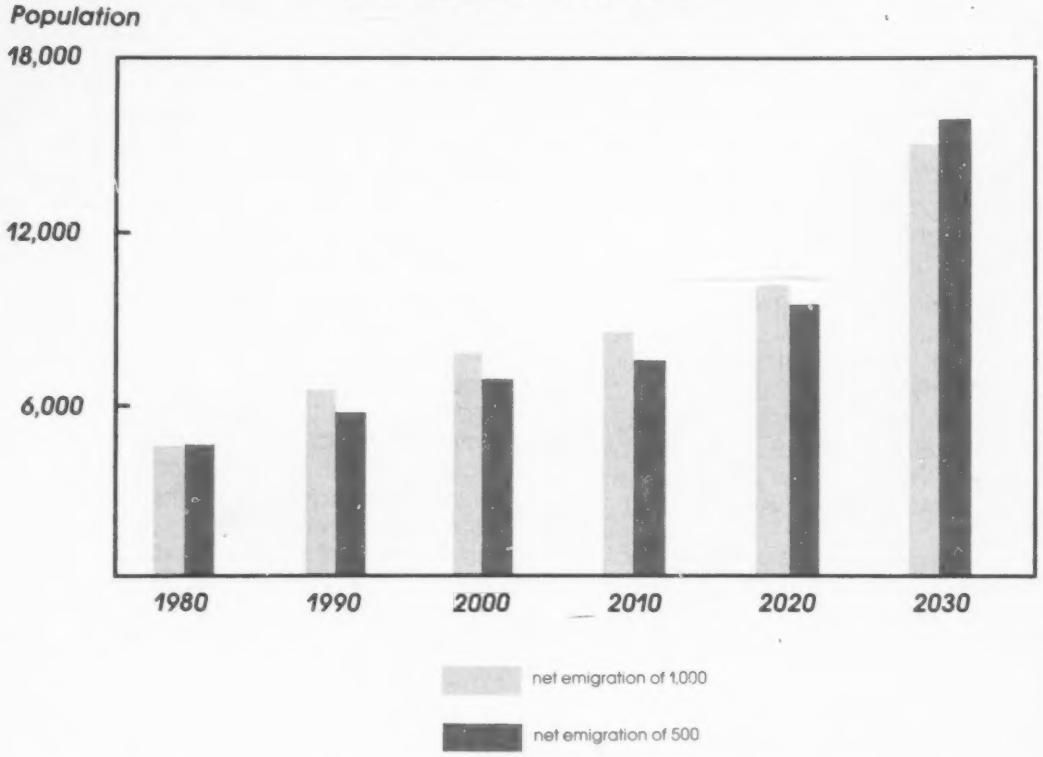
be 6,150 unemployed Vincentians, compared with 4,600 in 1980. By 2000, that number would climb to 7,100, assuming no further deterioration in employment conditions between now and then.

Turning to the other scenarios, under B (with net emigration assumed at half its current level) conditions would worsen, at least in the short run. By 2000, the labour force would number 55,693, with at least 8,300 out of work but looking for a job. The situation under C would be somewhat more attractive, though there too this pressing employment problem would be significant. By the turn of the century, 16,000 more jobs would have to be created simply to keep unemployment at its current level.

This imminent growth in the labour force reflects the large number of births that occurred in the late 1960s and early 1970s, when fertility rates were even higher than today. That large cohort of people is now entering the labour force, and despite significant losses through emigration it remains large enough to pose possibly serious problems for the country. And it is worth noting that for the next 20 years these projections are quite reliable. The people who could be looking for jobs in 1985 as well as in 1995 are already born; only variations in migration can affect how many Vincentians will be job-seekers in the years ahead.

Because of both the lower fertility postulated and the continuation of the current high level of net emigration, Scenario C is the most economically promising path in the long run. Although the number of islanders in the labour force will continue to grow after the turn of the century, only under C does there apper to be an end in sight. After 2020, the size of the labour force would level off at around 55,000. In contrast, under A that number would

Figure 5: Elderly Population (65 or Older) in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, 1980–2030



reach 90,000 in 2030, and under B it would exceed 70,000 by that year.

The Elderly: Most developing countries do not concern themselves with gerontological problems. Although the welfare of the elderly is customarily addressed, the problems associated with massive increases in the numbers of retirees are not given high priority. In the East Caribbean nations, as well as elsewhere, a substantial increase in the number of elderly—here defined as 65 or older—can be anticipated for early in the next century. They will be that large cohort of people presently entering the labour force who, by 2015 or 2020, will be entering the retirement stage of their lives.

The high fertility in the 1960s and earlier means that the number of Vincentians reaching age 65 will grow quite substantially in future years, particularly after the turn of the century. In 1980 a total of 4,576 people in the islands were 65 or older. That number will grow to 6,000 or more by 1990 and to 6,900–8,000 by the year 2000. Within 50 years the islands could be home to some 15,000–16,000 elderly people, posing a potentially difficult problem for the nation.

Because the elderly of the year 2030 are already born, Scenarios A and C have exactly the same number in their projected future population (see Figure 5; for supporting data, see Appendix Table D). Growth would be significant—74 percent by 2000 and 230 percent in 2030. To be sure, the proportion who are elderly would differ radically between scenarios, as noted earlier, but the numbers will be similar.

Under Scenario B the elderly population would grow somewhat more slowly until after 2030. This projection warrants some explanation, as under B net emigration is

half the level under A and C. Thus, the number of elderly would be expected to be larger. Under the net emigration assumptions used here, however, while many young people emigrate from St. Vincent and the Grenadines, a few elderly return to the islands. Thus, the higher net emigration is, the greater the number of potential returnees. Conversely, a lower net emigration figure yields a smaller number of returnees.

After the year 2020, however, the impact of the large cohort born in the early 1960s would begin to be felt, explaining the larger number of elderly under Scenario B than under either A or C. The number of elderly under Scenario B would grow by 50 percent by 2000 and by 340 percent by the year 2030, when the number would have passed 16,000.

Thus the gerontological issues that face St. Vincent and the Grenadines reflect the impact of long-run demographic changes. The fertility behaviour of one generation affects the population distribution for many years into the future, indeed until that generation passes out of existence. Although the problem of a rapidly growing elderly population may appear to be an issue for the distant future, it is nonetheless time to be aware of what will undoubtedly transpire. These people are born; most will be here in 2000 and 2030.

Conclusion: Even under the most optimistic conditions, St. Vincent and the Grenadines will undoubtedly see its population grow from the current level of nearly 100,000 to at least 150,000 in the not-too-distant future. Whether this will mark the end of growth or be just another step toward additional increases cannot be predicted at this time as so much depends on future demographic patterns. Clearly the nation cannot continue to grow at current rates; how that is avoided depends to a considerable extent on future levels of net emigration as well as future fertility, and on the development of population policies.

Appendices

Table A: Current and Projected Population of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, 1980–2030

Scenario	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020	2030
A	97,845	114,375	137,137	165,316	201,903	248,972
B	97,845	116,751	126,997	139,149	147,377	150,505
C	97,845	109,058	116,352	123,980	128,079	128,641
D	97,845	123,034	140,275	160,593	177,469	189,256
E	97,845	128,788	174,197	232,382	308,803	408,020

A: TFR of 4.5, net emigration of 1,000
B: TFR of 2.1, net emigration of 500
C: TFR of 2.8, net emigration of 1,000
D: TFR of 2.1, net migration of zero
E: TFR of 4.5, net migration of zero

Table B: Current and Projected School-Age Population (5–14) in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, 1980–2030

Scenario	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020	2030
A	28,570	29,180	36,933	42,706	50,892	59,713
B	28,570	30,159	25,389	24,372	24,470	22,137
C	28,570	29,180	24,200	25,619	24,663	22,931

Table C: Current and Projected Labour Force in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, 1980–2030

Scenario	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020	2030
A	31,259	40,981	47,607	57,470	73,741	90,098
B	31,259	43,114	55,693	66,862	70,153	70,824
C	31,259	39,509	47,563	53,314	55,913	55,198

Table D: Current and Projected Elderly Population (65 or Older) in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, 1980–2030

Scenario	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020	2030
A and C	4,576	6,669	7,998	8,712	10,246	15,060
B	4,576	5,973	6,862	7,521	9,516	16,032

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